National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) Coding Questions and Answers
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United States Fire Administration

1. How or what number do I use for an exposure number in the Incident Key "A?"

Exposure number should always be left as 000, UNLESS you have a fire that spreads from one building, structure, property or vehicle to another building, structure, property or vehicle. When that happens, the primary incident would have an exposure number of 000, the first exposure would have an exposure number of 001, the second 002, etc.

2. I have an incident that includes a firefighter casualty but it is giving us an error that states you can not have a firefighter casualty on an incident that is a contained fire. The casualty actually came about due to this incident and I thought all firefighter casualties had to be reported on the incident they were related to. Is my thinking wrong or am I reporting it the wrong way?

Your thinking is correct. All injuries must be reported to the incident upon which they occurred. However, you cannot code an incident as a confined fire if you have any injuries or fatalities OR a dollar loss greater than $5,000. When the firefighter was injured, the incident automatically became a full structure fire or similar incident.

3. What would be the incident type if a fire started in a sofa and stayed contained to that sofa?

If the sofa was inside the house, it would be Incident type 111 - Structure Fire.

4. Our fire departments are wondering what they should code the shooting incident that happened at NIU. If they were providing aid, I told them to complete a mutual aid report. But their question is what should their "actions taken" be—standby or incident command? I don't understand "incident command" so I thought I would ask this question. FYI: Incident command was set up & most departments said they "did nothing."

You are right. If the departments responded on the call as mutual aid, then they should complete a mutual aid report for an EMS incident. If all they did was stand by, then their actions taken should be standby.

5. I had a question about a call created in error from dispatch, and how that should be coded. The calls have no address, or unit to assign. They are simply a miss-typed key that creates "skipped" run number. It just seems if it was coded as a canceled call that it would skew statistics. What should be done?

It's not a call and an incident report should not be generated.

6. What would the code for Landing Zone Helicopter be? This is an incident type. I am thinking something should be under service call or something to that affect. I have a user looking for a code for it who said that it used to have something out there. I am not sure if my user is thinking of our old system or NFIRS.

Your user should use the incident type code: 462 Aircraft standby. This includes routine standby for takeoff and landing as well as emergency alerts at airports.

7. We had two people die from CO^2 due to a fire in an air handler. I'm assuming these would not be fire deaths. Is my assumption correct?

If those people died because of a direct relation to the fire in the HVAC system, then yes, they would be considered fire deaths.

8. Based on this rule and the below scenario that our customer is trying to report, which incident type and primary action taken should they use?

The scenario:
The Captain responded to a call for an alarm at the hospital in which the Captain reported it was a faulty smoke detector that had malfunctioned causing the alarm. He returned all responding units to service prior to arrival. The captain put the Incident type as 733-"smoke detector activation due to malfunction is used" and Primary Action Taken is set to 93-"Cancelled enroute" which we know is incorrect. To be able to close the report to get around the rule they selected "Other Action Taken" as the Primary Action Taken.

Which incident Type and primary action taken should they use for the above scenario? Also, when you said that the incident type must be cancelled with an Action Taken of 93, would the cancelled type be 633-dispatched and cancelled in route?

In your example, the Captain arrived on the scene, so that means there has to be some sort of "Incident Type." In this case, he determined that the detector was "faulty" so an Actions Taken of "Investigate" would satisfy this event of a 733 Incident Type.

There is no Incident Type "633;" The Dispatched and Cancelled en route is "611." If any unit arrives on the scene, there must be some incident type other than 611. To use Actions Taken "93" you must have an incident type of "611."

9. A department (Dept A) gives mutual aid to another department by standing by in the receiving department's firehouse and the receiving department (Dept B) gets a call. As noted in NFIRS, the giving department becomes the receiving department and must document everything regarding the incident they responded to. How do they document resources? Is it the giving department's resources or does the receiving department put their resource count because they were out on another call?

The "giving" department (Dept A) who is filling in for the department who "received" the call (Dept B) should fill out the incident report using the "receiving" department's (Dept B) FDID and incident number and the information on the personnel of the "giving" department (Dept A) should be in the report.

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